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Egyptian Christians under pressure

CAIRO (BP and local reports) — It's ugly for Christians in Cairo right now, deeply unsettling even to those who have weathered the ups and downs of the so-called "Arab Spring," said Hal Greaves (not his real name).

Another church was burned by a mob. Coptic Christians, fed up with being targeted, announced a peaceful protest for religious freedom on Oct. 9. The Egyptian military intervened, things escalated quickly, and more than 20 were left dead with hundreds more injured, international news outlets say.

Coptic Christians are the oldest Christian group in Africa, believed to have been evangelized shortly after the ascension of Christ. They constituted a majority of the Egyptian population until well after the Muslim invasion of 641 A.D. Prior to the recent political uprising in Egypt, Copts and Muslims shared an uneasy peace.

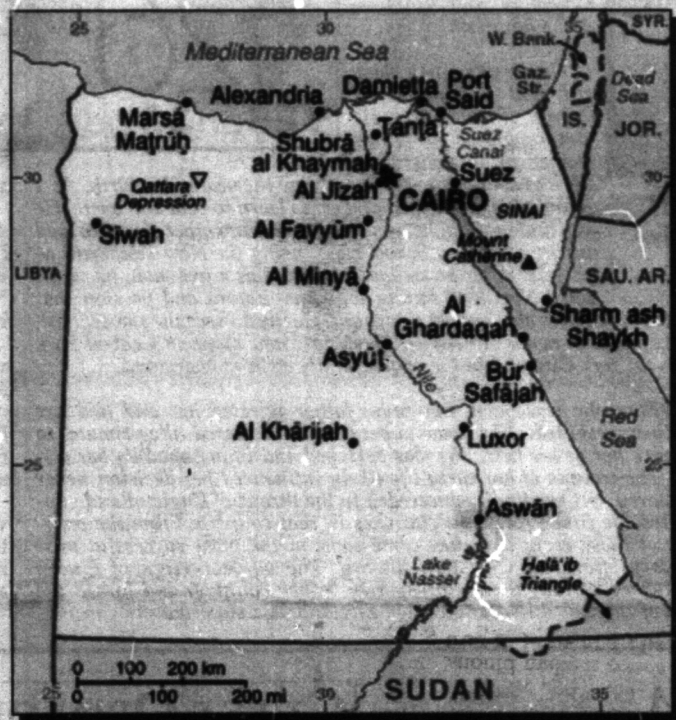
Eyewitnesses to the most recent carnage reported seeing mangled bodies and body parts run over by military vehicles in the fray, but the Egyptian military denies driving into the crowds and opening fire on them, according to BBC news.

Sources differ on who's to blame, but many report this is the worst violence in Egypt since President Hosni Mubarak was ousted in February — and possibly the worst violence toward Christians there in modern history.

"Needless to say, Egypt is still in development and even in crisis. The events of the Christian march has firmly put Egypt on the list of countries with poor religious freedom," said Ron Robinson (not his real name), a Christian worker who has spent time in Egypt.

The unrest and violence has been growing over time as the nation's leadership remains unresolved, he said. Christians are tense, wondering who is behind the attacks and who will have power when all is said and done: a secular government, or an Islamist one?

Some observers believe the unstated goal of the Coptic persecution is to rid the majority Muslim country of all Christians, just as Egyptian Jews were forced to leave in the 1950s.



"Needless to say, Egypt is still in development and even in crisis. The events of the Christian march has firmly put Egypt on the list of countries with poor religious freedom. ... We have been seeing probably some of the highest numbers of Copts and evangelicals leaving Egypt this year than any other year posted. There is great fear of where this is heading for those of Christian background."

— "Ron Robinson"
Christian worker
spent time in Egypt

"We have been seeing probably some of the highest numbers of Copts and evangelicals leaving Egypt this year than any other year posted," Robinson said. "There is great fear of where this is heading for those of Christian background."

Coptic Christians make up about 10% of Egypt's population. More than 100,000 Coptic Christians have already fled revolutionary Egypt this year, according to the Union of Egyptian Human Rights Organizations, which predicts an additional 250,000 may seek refuge elsewhere before year's end.

"The Christians I have talked to are afraid and want to leave," said Greaves, a Christian worker

who has spent time in Egypt. "Even before this event, people have been anxious about the uncertainty of the future. There is a lot of fear in the Christian community."

Generally, Coptic Christians are Christian by tradition and birth rather than by a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, Robinson said. If a person's parents were Christian, that person's ID card says he/she is, too.

"In Egypt, they make a distinction that if you follow Jesus Christ, then you will hear Christians use the term 'Believer,'" he said. "Many of the Coptic Orthodox church members have never made a profession of faith, and many never really go to church."

Like with most denominations and religions, only some are truly Jesus' disciples among the crowd of nominal adherents, said Nik Ripken (not his real name), who has served 25 years with the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and is an expert on the persecuted church in Muslim contexts.

"We dare not ignore historical or cultural Christians who are being slaughtered," Ripken said. "This is the oft-forgotten 'rule' of history, that when the bad guys come after true Believers, they take everyone — especially the historical Christians."

Historical Christians dare not continue without embracing a real faith, he added. "If one is going to face persecution, he or she should make it count by being true to Jesus and His teachings, otherwise persecution comes and we get little spiritual strength, or we fight persecution with the wrong and ineffective tools," Ripken said.

Believers in Egypt are hoping for the Spirit to sweep through Egypt, and for Cop's and Muslims alike to find true faith in Christ and "make it count." Before the violence took place, Egyptian Believers were already planning a series of revivals all across the country for mid-October.

"Pastors are reporting an openness to the Gospel in their communities and a hopefulness that the Lord will foment another revolution, but this one in the hearts and souls of every Egyptian," said Marshall Jackson (not his real name), a Christian worker who has lived in Egypt in the past.

Sarah Jenkins (not her real name), a Christian worker who has spent time in Egypt, said Believers have responded to the extreme tension by fasting and praying that God would bring peace to Egypt.

"Please pray with us that God would answer this prayer and fulfill the promise of Isaiah 19 in bringing ultimate peace to Egypt through the person of Jesus Christ," she said. Believers in Egypt have asked for Christians in the West to pray:

- for Egypt's Believers to stay in Egypt.
- for them to forgive as Jesus commands.
- for their main concern to be seeing their Muslim neighbors come to faith in Jesus.



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The unworthy among us

A young, unmarried graduate student found herself pregnant and without support. She chose life and gave birth to a son, who was adopted by the Jobs family and named Steven. Steve Jobs, of Apple, Inc., fame, went on to literally change the world, several times over.

When he was born, his single mother wasn't exactly sure who the father was, so she left that box blank on his birth certificate and simply made up a last name for the boy. He never met his father, but grew up to define a generation of actors and win Academy Awards for best actor and lifetime achievement. He inspired millions of young people around the world in one of his last movie roles. We know him as Colonel Nicholson in *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, and as Obi-Wan Kenobi in *Star Wars* — Alec Guinness.

He was born to a slave girl, and rumored to be the son of her master. He was separated from his mother in infancy when she was sold. He never even knew the year of his birth. As a young man, he pushed himself to learn to read and write. He was beaten when he was caught teaching other slaves to read during a Sunday School class, using the New Testament as his text. After he escaped and lived as a free man, he captivated Northern society with the oratory and passion that fueled his tireless abolitionist campaign. He lived to see the slaves freed, and statues in honor of Frederick Douglass now stand in Central Park in New York City and in the county of his birth in Maryland.

When she was born, her royal father rejected her and had her mother executed. She was subsequently declared illegitimate to remove her as his heir. She was betrayed and imprisoned by her sister. The trauma of her early life likely influenced her decision never to marry, but she finally succeeded to the throne of England and supported the first Protestant churches in that country. From the progeny of those early churches came some of the most successful missionary efforts in Christian history. The 44-year reign of Queen Elizabeth I brought new prosperity to her country, and forced the rest of the world to acknowledge England as a superpower.

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A Google search for "Fraud and Church" resulted in 62,100,000 hits. The stories are interesting. Seventy-five fraud victims testified that a Baptist foundation in another state defrauded them in a real estate Ponzi scheme. A former youth assistant, now incarcerated in another state, coerced church members to invest in church securities that were not real.

Closer to home, a student from my graduate class at Mississippi College sits in my office and reveals intimate details about a life-time deacon at the student's home Mississippi church who for many years redirected church funds for his own personal use. Testimony is that he lived well and since his departure, the church has monies that seem previously to have been inadequate.

Common knowledge in the fight against fraud is that hard economic times bring pressures on institutions and individuals to look for alternative solutions to their financial woes. This pressure is especially true for not-for-profit groups like our own Baptist churches. Some of us forget that decisions about church finances are as big as difficulties get. Choices may lead to trouble with funding outreach

VOTEforLIFE
YESon26.net

Give me a chance.
I am a person.

whisk the little bodies into a sewer system somewhere.

It is the shame of America and a stench in the nostrils of Almighty God, and it's well past time we did something about it. On November 8, vote Yes on Initiative 26 (also known as the Personhood Amendment). Initiative 26 is an opportunity for Mississippians to amend their state constitution to protect all human life from the moment of fertilization.

Don't be confused by those who would panic Mississippians with false or misleading information — especially from pro-abortion outsiders who believe Mississippians are too dumb to make such a momentous decision on their own. After all, a Planned Parenthood chaplain has already come to Mississippi from Seattle masquerading as a Southern Baptist minister in an attempt to sway the vote.

Don't rely on word of mouth to decide how you're going to vote. Get the facts. Visit Yeson26.com, and christianaction.com, to get an understanding of what is at stake. Babies "not worthy of life" are being exterminated every week in Mississippi. Perhaps among them is the next Jobs, Guinness, Douglass, or Elizabeth. God has a place for everyone. Vote Yes on 26.

work is hard or harder than everybody else.

Rationalization is powerful. "Not to worry, this is our church. People are honest here." Maybe not.

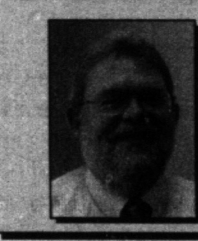
Remember, one of the twelve apostles that Jesus personally chose had been entrusted with the moneybag for the group (John 13:29) and was described by John as a thief who used to help himself to what was put into it (John 12:6).

Judas was a fraudster close enough to Jesus to dip bread with him in the same cup (Mark 14:20). The night of the Last Supper, Judas conferred with the chief priests and officers on how he could betray Jesus for money (Luke 22:3-6). At this point he did not love Jesus. He loved money and was controlled by passions of the flesh.

Church leaders and members should be diligent. Many fraudsters are also passionate today.

Morgan is assistant professor of accounting in the School of Business at Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College in Clinton, and a former criminal investigator for the Mississippi State Tax Commission in Jackson. He may be contacted at morgan00@mc.edu.

GUEST OPINION:



Watch for fraud during hard times

By Mark I. Morgan
Madison

God enough to avoid stealing from Him or His people?

I understand what you may think: "He's talking about that church down the road. I know it's not the gloriously-helpful, contagiously-friendly souls made in the image of God sitting with me at big church." Maybe it is.

The study of fraud shows us that the typical fraudster is a violator of trust. To commit fraud, one must be in a position that provides the opportunity to deceive and take something of value. These folks sometimes sell us not-so-reputable investments.

Frequently they take positions in the church, positions maybe too numerous to completely fill. People who handle God's property may begin to think of it as their own, especially if they think their

work is hard or harder than everybody else.

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Southern Baptists give hope to 'trash' children

BAKLADESH (BP) — Najia Khatun (not her real name) knows what her life would be like without the Light of Hope Center in Bangladesh. She knows she would be hungry. She knows she would be uneducated. She knows she would be working long hours at a garment factory.

Najia knows, and she is grateful. "Before there were a lot of problems in my family. There was no money for food," 17-year-old Najia said. "Now I have a job, and I am able to help my family. I am the main breadwinner in my family."

Najia and her 14-year-old sister, Amila Khatun (not her real name) began studying at the Light of Hope Center when it first opened in September 2006. Light of Hope continues in operation today with help from the Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund.

Najia and Amila, like the other 12 girls who come to the center, live in a slum of tiny bamboo houses that have tin roofs and mud floors. While these seem to be only temporary homes set on swamp land or along railroad tracks, the families do have landlords who expect rent money.

Najia's father comes and goes, taking money from the family but never contributing any. Their mother doesn't work. One older sister is sick, and the other siblings have married and moved away. Najia and Amila are expected to bring home money, however they can get it.

Some of the girls at the center were raised by beggars to become beggars, while others have mothers who work as prostitutes, a center staff worker said. Inside the Light of Hope Center, that world fades away. The girls eat a healthy breakfast, take showers, put on clean school uniforms, hear Bible teaching, sing Christian songs, and then begin their studies in

the Bangla language. Those studies include math, spelling, science, grammar, and English. Before they leave to go to their places of work as paid apprentices or trainees, World Hunger Fund dollars feed the girls again — a hearty lunch of rice and lentils with vegetables, eggs, fish, or meat.

"Experiencing even in a very small way the lifestyle of beggar families... just being around them on the street, almost makes you feel helpless, like there's nothing you can even do for them," said

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HOPE FOR THE FUTURE — Students at the Light of Hope Center ask God's blessing on a healthy lunch of rice, lentils, and vegetables. The Southern Baptist World Hunger Fund provides two meals a day for these girls — meals they likely would not have otherwise. (BP photo)

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Isla Metzger (not her real name), who recently came from the U.S. Midwest to minister for six months at the Light of Hope Center, "but then I was reminded that these girls are from those circumstances and that this is something that can help them get out of that."

Providing lasting help, the kind that will help cure hunger and prevent the cycle of poverty from proliferating, was exactly the goal of the two American Christian women who founded the center. "I knew that just giving [beggars] money was not going to help the situation," said Southern Baptist Geri Hennerman (not her real name).

"I wanted to do something that was going to help them long-term. Sharing Christ with them is going to help them for eternity, but also to give them some skills and education that will help them get jobs and provide for their families."

Najia works as a Bangla tutor and hopes to become a translator. Amila has studied under a housekeeper, has learned to make jewelry, and currently attends a sewing class. Najia's best friend, Lili Sabarna (not her real name), works as a nanny in an American family's home.

"For my family, they have given me a job, and my family is able to be helped by [gifts of] food or medicine," Lili said. "I have learned how to read and write, school in general. I've learned about Jesus. I've become a believer. I don't know who gave us that but..."

Lili's family is Hindu. Najia and Amila's family is Muslim, as are the families of most of the girls. Several of the girls, including Lili, Najia, and Amila, are now followers of Jesus Christ who are growing daily in their walk with Him, said Jane Wise (not her real name).

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Looking back

10 years ago

The Jay Sekulow-led American Center for Law and Justice announces that it is offering to defend any school district or student organization that displays "God Bless America" in school settings.

20 years ago

The opening session of the Russian parliament finds itself competing with a rush of deputies and staff trying to get hold of their own copies of the Bible being distributed free, reports Maurice Harvey, photojournalist for the United Bible Societies.

50 years ago

Nearly an entire city block in downtown Dallas is given to Baylor University in what will eventually become the largest gift in the Baptist school's history.



MISSISSIPPI
BAPTISTS

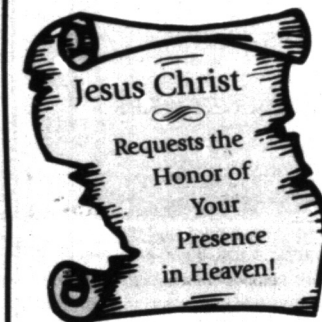
THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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YOU CAN RESPOND
RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

BIBLIOPHET

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004
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QFBLOFH, VG CFUIPFE
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ZIE DQIMFH NQF TIIL
IW NQRM KILUE LRQD
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QFRLM IW NQF
ORHZEIV KQRDQ QF
QBNQ TLIVRMFE NI
NQFV NQBN UIPF QRV?
SBVFN NKI:WRPF

Clue: T = P

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Hebrews Nine: Twelve

GOOD GONE WILD

Recently I was traveling through some areas of north Mississippi, and I saw several signs at places that said, "Kudzu Control." I do not know who put the signs up, but I saw huge areas of land that were covered with Kudzu. I find it interesting that people from other places who are traveling through our state along some of our roads that are covered up with Kudzu wonder what in the world has covered up all of the land, trees, telephone poles, and houses and barns if left alone. It is Kudzu! It is an amazing vine with big leaves that seemingly will grow anywhere and at such a rapid pace that you can almost watch it grow.

The story is told of some folks who had moved into an area where there was a lot of Kudzu. They wanted to know how to get rid of it. They were told by some neighbors in the area that there was no way to get rid of it, that you just have to move away under the cover of darkness. They wanted to know why they had to leave in the dark and were told if they leave in the daylight, it would follow you.

I was reminded of years ago when I was in elementary school in north Mississippi. We had gullies everywhere around where we lived. In places it looked like soil erosion was going to wash everything away. I recall that some folks brought Kudzu plantings to our school and encouraged the children to take some of it home with them and plant it in areas that had soil erosion. Just stick it in the ground and the Kudzu will do the rest. It will help the soil erosion. So, as you can imagine, hundreds of school children got several of the plantings and took them home. I did too!

Out behind the house where we lived there were huge, deep gullies that we played in, and as a kid it looked to me as if the gullies were as high as the Rocky Mountains. As we had been instructed, we planted Kudzu. In a short period of time, you no longer saw the gullies. You only saw the Kudzu covering the hills and valleys. Year after year, and decade after decade it kept extending its tentacles everywhere. In fact, as the sign would indicate, this wonderful, amazing plant had done so much good that it was starting to be a problem that needed to be brought under control. Just left alone Kudzu can grow so fast and become so dense that it smothers the life out of other good things. It can kill trees, wipe out other grasses and bushes, and even crops. It can become good gone wild. While there were efforts years ago to make sure that it was planted all around the area to stop one bad thing, when left

alone it became detrimental to other good things.

It seems that is true with almost any good thing that comes along. Take for instance transportation. Today with good roads and fast vehicles we can travel further in a day than our great grandparents traveled in a week. Of course, that is a wonderful thing that you and I are privileged to utilize, but the good also becomes the bad as our trucks and automobiles are the number one pollutants of our air, to say nothing of the danger and the death that can be caused because we travel too fast and too far. It is good gone wild! One of the problems is that we do not recognize what is taking place. We are focused on just the good and appreciate the improvement of either stopping soil erosion or having a better way to get around.

It happens again and again that good goes wild in rapid fashion in many areas that can affect us personally. For instance, think about the Internet and the ramifications of what is taking place there. The high speed computer connectedness that we have with our world is amazing. It provides for instant connectivity with people around the globe. Information that before was only available to the most skilled of researchers and investigators is now available to all of us at the click of a mouse or just a momentary word search on Google or Bing. It is an eye-opening and sometimes eye-popping experience to realize all the resources you have at your fingertips when you want to find information or place an order. At times, the good goes wild.

Things that were not available to anyone at one time have now become a trap and a pitfall for a lot of people. Misinformation and immoral products can be at a person's fingertips and they hardly know that it is there until it has been emblazoned on their minds. Pornography is rampant and the conveyors of those materials are masters at seeking to lure people to participate. One of the most active areas of the internet is provided to millions and millions of people on Facebook, which is an almost instant connection with people with whom you may have lost contact through the years. That certainly can be a good thing, but it also holds the potential of doing great damage. Some studies have shown that as many as 20-30%

of divorces begin by someone connecting with an old flame, filled with the memories of days that were so young, innocent, and fun-filled. Those memories are forced to compete with the difficulties and somewhat daily drudgery of today, trying to pay bills, maintain a relationship, raise kids, and work. The daily grind of a marriage can lose out in a hurry, and so it is that an amazing thing like instant connection with people around the world can become good gone wild. If we are not careful, the good can do irrefutable damage.

That is also true in our churches as we deal with new days and new ways of singing and celebrating. In all honesty, there is a lot of good to be said about some of the songs that have emerged in our Christian faith, and even some of the ways that they are being presented, but at the same time there must be some consideration given and some care expressed when those things smother out some of the good and godly music that already existed. Some things are not wrong and certainly not evil simply because they are 20 or 30 years old or even 130 years old. It can become good gone wild, and then we are stuck with the repercussion of some

things that have been left behind or even destroyed.

One other area that has become so monumental in our churches, that brings a world of good and has a right concern, is the effort to reach children and youth and to design programs and involvement for them so that the next generation can know Jesus and serve Him. It is proper and essential for our churches to give attention to our youth and children. It is magnificent that they are making an investment in programs, personnel, and facilities to connect them to the church and most of all bring them to an experience with our living Lord — but sometimes if we are not careful, that will become the only focus that we have. We will lose sight of our seniors who not only desire to serve, but who need to be cared for in days when they are unable to serve as they once did. The good that is being done in the younger area can become so dominant that we do not care for the aging who also need ministry in the name of Jesus.

Some things that are at our disposal are good, but it is wise for us to be alert for when good goes wild. Kudzu is a wonderful plant that can do amazing things to help our land, but gone wild can destroy even oak trees and other needed vegetation. It is possible to celebrate the good and, at needed points, keep it in check so that the good that already existed can be aided also.

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Christian Action Commission

PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES

for Christian Living

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'I am pro-life, but...'

By Jimmy Porter
Mississippi Baptist Christian
Action Commission

Those opposed to the statewide Initiative No. 26, also known as the Personhood Amendment, start out by saying, "I am pro-life, but..." Then they begin tearing down the amendment, not with truth and facts, but falsehoods, confusion, rumors and fear tactics. To say, "I am pro-life, but..." is likened to the lady who said to her doctor, "Doctor, I am afraid I am a little bit pregnant." Well, you are or you aren't because in life there are some things you cannot have both ways.

You will hear some who are saying there are going to be unintended consequences. This may be true in some cases but the other two initiatives, voter ID and eminent domain, will also have unintended consequences. However, this does not warrant a no vote on Initiative 26.

DOES INITIATIVE 26 SUPPORT CLONING? No! This is perhaps the most confusing of the rumors circulating. Bill Crawford, a contributing columnist to the Clarion Ledger, wrote an article on Sunday, October 9 titled "Cloning fouls my vote for

initiative." Having read the article several times, it appears (at least to me) that he insinuates that passage of Initiative 26 would lead to legalized cloning as one of the unintended consequences. I question the research he did before writing his column, especially when he states, "I know, I know, the smart lawyers behind this approach to nullify Roe vs. Wade say cloning is illegal in Mississippi so this won't legalize cloning. Well, my experience tells me smart lawyers often forget about another law called the law of unintended consequences." Why? Evidently Mr. Crawford does not even know that statutes do not exist in our code that make cloning illegal. If I read him correctly, he can now vote YES on 26 because his fears are removed because cloning is already legal.

If you OPPOSE cloning, then vote yes on Initiative 26. Cloning is often performed for "embryonic stem cell research," where a human embryo is cloned and its stem cells are harvested for profit

and research. Therefore, when we define life at the moment of fertilization, this practice will be illegal. This is a great first step AGAINST cloning, but we also need to continue asking our legislature to pass a complete ban on all cloning. If you oppose cloning, then you must support this Personhood Amendment and vote yes on November 8.

DOES INITIATIVE 26 OUTLAW ALL CONTRACEPTIVES? NO! The amendment will not ban the use of hormonal contraceptives, including most forms of the "Pill." It will ban the use of RU486 and IUDs that are abortifacients. These abortifacients allow a baby to be conceived and then expelled, thus ending life.

DOES INITIATIVE 26 END INVITRO (IVF) FERTILIZATION? NO! This practice will not be illegal. IVF will continue to be an available solution for infertile women with one exception — the remaining embryos cannot be destroyed. To the sur-

prise of many, there are pro-life options which already exist that not only protect but also give life to these embryos. For example, the unborn embryo can be saved for a later pregnancy or the embryo can be placed with an agency, like Snowflake Ministry, where they can be adopted by infertile couples.

DOES INITIATIVE 26 PREVENT A DOCTOR FROM PRACTICING LIFE SAVING PROCEDURES? NO! Rumors abound that if a female has a troubled pregnancy, she cannot receive medical assistance from her attending physician. These rumors are false. The doctor's goal is and has always been to save the life of the mother and child, but if this is impossible he/she must save the life of the mother when the baby is unviable.

The Liberty Counsel, a non-profit public interest law firm specializing in the First Amendment, issued a memorandum on July 14, 2011 that states, "Based upon our review of the Mississippi statutes, it is our opinion that current law already appears to provide adequate protection from criminal liability for licensed physicians performing legitimate medical proce-

dures at the request of the mother of the unborn child."

The Mississippi Medical Association has just released a statement by their trustees stating they cannot support the Personhood Amendment. Just remember they do not speak for all their members just as I cannot speak for all Mississippi Baptists. There are many physicians in our state who DO support Initiative 26 and will vote YES on November 8.

This initiative is about defining in our constitution what already is being taught in basic biology — when the sperm fertilizes the egg, life begins. Life begins at the moment of fertilization and is to be protected by law. Please call us at the Christian Action Commission (601-292-3329 or 1-800-748-1651) with your questions. I encourage you to go to www.Yeson26.net and read the information on that site. Speak to your friends, pray, and debunk the lies and rumors that are circulating around our state. A YES vote on November 8 is a vote for life.

Porter can be contacted at 601-292-3332 or at jporter@christianaction.com.



Porter

Keep up with Mississippi Baptist news at www.mbc.org.

MS POSITIONS

MURPHY CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH, LOUISVILLE, MS IS SEEKING A PART-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR. Send resume and application letter to include 3 references to the Youth Director Search Committee, 5420 Bond Road, Louisville, MS 39339 or via email to rustyfoister1@gmail.com.
NEW SIGHT BAPTIST CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN, MS IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL MUSIC DIRECTOR. Send resumes to: Charlotte Newell, 1017 Common Street, Wesson, MS 39191 or email to wanchar2393@att.net.
ROSELAND PARK BAPTIST CHURCH IN PICAYUNE, MS IS SEEKING AN ASSOCIATE PASTOR/MINISTER OF EDUCATION. Send resumes by e-mail to rbcapmoe@yahoo.com or Roseland Park Baptist Church, Associate Pastor/Minister of Education Search Committee, 2130 Highway 11 N, Picayune, MS 39466.

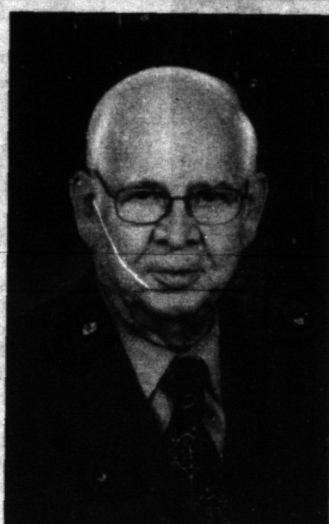
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OBITUARY

Kenneth Young Forbus passed away at St. Dominic Memorial Hospital in Jackson on October 12. Forbus was born on August 29, 1929 in Alexander City, Alabama to Albert and Alma Forbus and graduated from Avondale High School when he was only 16 years old.



Forbus

On November 18, 1947 he married his childhood sweetheart, Catherine Smyth and soon after entered Howard College in Birmingham to pursue his education in music. Upon completion of his BA in music at Howard College, Kenneth and Catherine moved to Fort Worth, Texas to continue his education at Southwestern Seminary. After completing a

Masters degree in Church Music, he, Catherine and their newborn son, Ricky moved to Greenville in August 1954 to join the staff of First Church as Minister of Music. He served full-time on the staff of the church for over 45 years, retiring in 1999 after taking on additional roles throughout the years as Educational Director, Associate Pastor, Senior Adult Minister and Church Administrator. He was preceded in death by his parents Albert and Alma Forbus; his brothers Charles Forbus and Clyde Forbus; and his sister Dorothy Forbus Jordan. He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Catherine Forbus, his son Richard Forbus and his wife Nancy of Loganville, Ga. and his daughter Kathy Forbus Whitfield and her husband Glenn of Madison; a brother, Harry Franklin Forbus (Sue) of Stanton, Va.; grandsons Maclane Forbus (Kerrie) and Taylor Forbus (Kelly) of Atlanta, Ga.; Greg Pigott of Madison; and granddaughter Katie Pigott of Nashville, Tenn. He had 4 great grandchildren — Samuel Forbus, Anna Forbus, Caleb Forbus and Christian Forbus of Atlanta, Ga. Following a private burial in Wright & Ferguson Cemetery in Ridgeland on Oct. 14, a celebration of Kenneth Forbus' life was held at First Church of Greenville on October 15. In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to the Kenneth and Catherine Forbus Scholarship Fund at New Orleans Theological Seminary or Trove Global Impact Fund to be used to assist ministers and musicians in their training.



1. New Liberty Church, Iuka



2. Hollis ordination



3. Grandview Church, Pearl



4. Ware ordination

1. New Liberty Church, Iuka, recognizes its Bible drill participants. Shown, from left, are Austin Knapp, Brooke Hudson, Avaline Morris, Sarah Odom, and Tyler Kennedy.

2. First Church, Vardaman, ordained Franklin Hollis III as deacon Aug. 28. Shown with Hollis is his family: F.G., Kristen, and Hope.

3. Ladies from Grandview Church, Pearl, are shown with many of the reversible clothes they made for children in Haiti. This was one of several mission projects the Women on Missions sponsor.

4. County Line Church, Union, recently ordained Benny Ware as deacon. Shown are Ware and David Jay, pastor.

5. Poplar Springs Church, Hazlehurst, will host the Southern Plainsmen Quartet Oct. 30, 10:30 a.m. during the church's 5th Sunday celebration.

6. Union Church, Rankin Association, ordained Ray Douglas, Phillip Means, and Chad Miley as deacons Oct. 2. Shown are Douglas, Means, Miley, and pastor Larry Russell.

7. Handsboro Church, Gulfport, ordained Matt Varner as deacon Sept. 11. Shown are Michael Gooch, Jane Varner, Varner, and interim pastor Ernie Sadler.

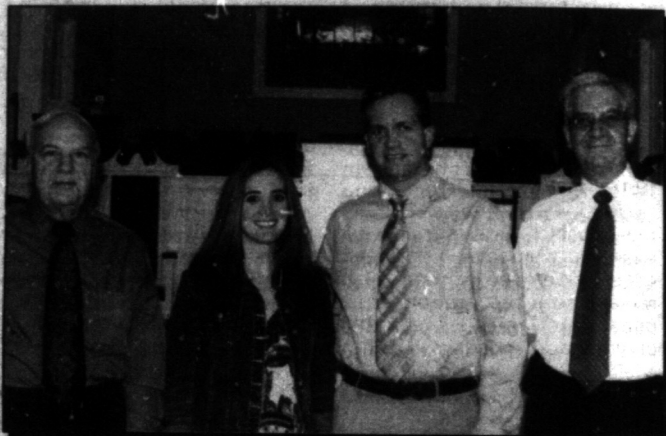
8. First Church, Fannin, will be holding its annual Harvest Festival Oct. 29, 4-7 p.m., including carnival games, inflatable jumpies, hay rides, train rides, pony rides, petting zoo, entertainment, cake walk, kiddie cupcake walk and story time, pumpkin carving, with hamburgers, hot dogs, chips and nachos, cotton candy and popcorn, funnel cakes, sno cones, soft drinks, tea, and lemonade. Free.

9. First Church, Lumberton, ordained Gene R. Johnson as deacon Oct. 2. Shown are pastor John Sapp, Johnson, and AMD Carl Myers.

10. First Church, Fulton, celebrated Summer With the Saints in July, honoring church members who are 80+ years of age. A fellowship dinner was held in their honor. Shown are the participants.



6. Union Church, Rankin Association



7. Varner ordination



9. Johnson ordination



10. First Church, Fulton

Church security: As crime increases, churches must plan

By Chester L. Quarles
Correspondent

First in a seven-part, aperiodical series

Church crimes are increasing exponentially. While attacks are geographically isolated, they are occurring in almost every state on a regular basis. Sanctuary size or membership levels don't correlate when churches are selected as attack zones. Some churches are targeted because they are located in more vulnerable, inner-city locations. Other churches are targeted because they are "soft" and "easy" targets.

Churches are not safe havens! Criminals hold almost nothing sacred! Murder, robbery, burglary, rape, child abduction, pedophilia, and crimes at off-facility, church sponsored activities are becoming more frequent. Car theft and automobile break-ins are perpetrated during services, while burglary and arson are after-hours problems. Some targeting occurs during services.

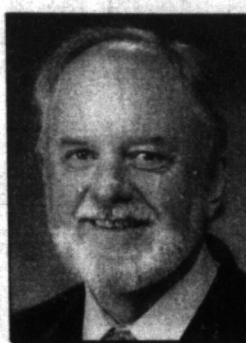
In developing comprehensive security plans, we should always remember the words of our Lord in Matthew 10:16, when he challenged his disciples, "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves." We need wisdom beyond ourselves and a recognition of the evil in our society. James 1:5 recorded, "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of

God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach."

Jeffrey Hawkins, in writing Security and Emergency Planning for Faith-Based Organizations, quoted an online July 2008 poll taken by the Christian News Web site, OneNewsNow.com. This survey indicated that "over 75% of all responding Christian churches indicated that they had no security or emergency plans in place." Your church should be an exception to this statistic.

The first step in church security is to read the Word and pray for guidance in finding solutions to the complex issues of crime. The second step is to recognize and accept the fact that churches are frequently targeted. The third step is to form a security committee that is representative of all ministries, ages, and genders.

The committee should then complete a comprehensive risk assessment. How dangerous is your neighborhood? Have any churches been tar-



Quarles

geted in your area? Your local police or sheriff's department can help you focus your priorities and give you specifics appropriate to your site.

If security cameras, burglar and/or fire alarms, or contract security officers are needed, you will also be dealing with for-profit security companies. Oftentimes your security committee will be inundated with crime data, some of which may be contradictory. Always remember that private companies offer a service or a product, so sometimes their assessments are biased in favor of a profit.

Remember that the word "security" is a positive term. Security doesn't have to cost a lot. In fact, some of the best security programs are free! Even if security requires a financial investment, it is a wise expenditure when considering the vulnerability of not addressing your risks. Substantial liability results from a secular Pollyanna approach. Ultimately, lawsuits may be your highest risk!

Most churches already have a security program in place. A welcoming

committee, sometimes called greeters, are components of an effective guardian program. A church member stands at each entrance and welcomes both members and visitors as they enter. Criminals don't want a welcoming. They don't want your greeter to look them in the eye or to shake their hand. They want to reconnoiter the premises to see if they can target your facility successfully.

A cold-hearted church that does not recognize nor greet visitors (indeed, the members don't even speak to their visitors) is like a magnet to a church criminal.

Warm-hearted, caring churches are crime resistant by their very nature, but even a warm-hearted church needs a viable security and safety plan.

Quarles is professor emeritus of criminal justice and homeland security at the University of Mississippi, and co-author of the book, *Crime Prevention for Houses of Worship*. He may be contacted at cquarles@olemiss.edu. Copyright 2011. Used by permission.

COLLEGE NEWS

1. Tommy King, president of William Carey University, recently advanced to the office of president of the Mississippi Association of Colleges and Universities (MAC) at the 78th annual meeting held at Mississippi Valley State University. King was elected to the MAC Board at the annual conference in 2009, progressing through the ranks in office each year.

2. Blue Mountain College and Profile Products LLC have formed a partnership to build Profile Fields athletics complex adjacent to the BMC campus. Gathered at the college to sign the agreement are: (seated) John A. Schuch, president and CEO of Profile and Bettye Rogers Coward, BMC president. Standing are Sam Patterson, BMC trustee; Dwight Schipke, vice-president of manufacturing at Profile; Steve Ade, chief financial officer at Profile; and Harold Wayne Hankins, vice-chair of the BMC board of trustees.

3. Mississippi College physician assistant students visited with Lt. Gov. Phil Bryant at the Capitol as part of a national tribute to their profession. Shown are Becki Loveless, MC P.A. program's pre-clinical education director; Stephen English, P.A. student from Jacksonville, Fla.;



2. Blue Mountain College

Jannah Herrington, P.A. student from Pearl; Bryant; Bethany Faison, P.A. student from Jackson; and Brittanye Dutton, P.A. student from Shreveport, La.

4. David J. Gamston, minister of Carey Baptist Church in Moulton, England, was the guest speaker for William Carey University's Carey Lecture on Wednesday, October 12, in Smith Auditorium. A question and answer session followed the lecture in the Lucile Parker Gallery. Gamston and his wife, Beth, also had the opportunity to participate in other activities including tea time with the WCU soccer players who are from



3. Mississippi College



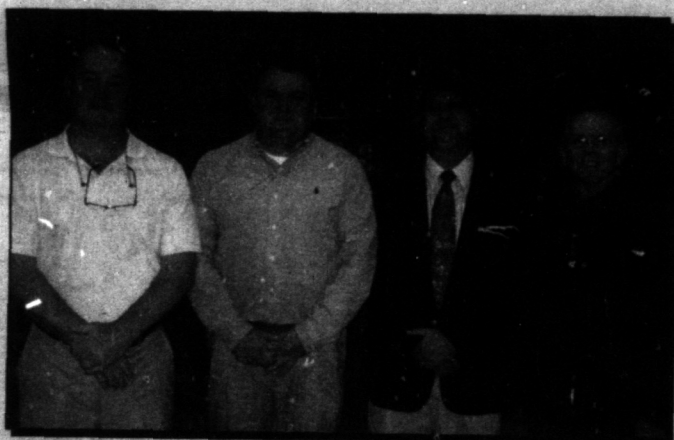
4. Gamston visit

JUST FOR THE RECORD

1. **New Hope Church, Harbortown**, sponsored a drive-in movie night, showing *A Thief in the Night*. Eighty-seven people attended.
2. **Center Terrace Church, Canton**, is hosting Allen Harris in concert Oct. 30, 6 p.m. A love offering will be received.
3. **Shiloh Church, Big Creek**, ordained David Martin to the gospel ministry Oct. 9. Shown are pastor John Hearn and Martin.
4. **Oak Hill Church, Meridian**, recently ordained three men as deacons. Shown are Jack Cormier, Leland Irby, Lee Jackson, and pastor Mike Russell.



3. Martin ordination



4. Oak Hill Church, Meridian

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION Scheduled Special Events

Sunday, October 30, 2011

Exhibits/Lifeway
FBC, Jackson — Fellowship Hall (FH)
East; 3-5 p.m., 7-8 p.m.
Setup for LifeWay Christian Bookstore
only [Marcus Peagler — 601-292-3283]

Monday, October 31, 2011

Exhibits/Lifeway
FBC, Jackson — FH East; noon-9 p.m.
[Marcus Peagler — 601-292-3283]

MBCEF — Mississippi Baptist Christian
Educators Fellowship Luncheon
Reservations required, Cost, \$10
FBC, Jackson — Christian Life Center
(Auditorium Room); 9:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
[Paul Harrell — 601-927-7237 (cell)]

Ministers' Wives Conference
FBC, Jackson — Chapel
1-4:45 p.m.
[Kay McDonnell — 601-942-5848 (cell)]

Pastors' Conference
FBC, Jackson — Sanctuary
1st Session, 1:15-4:35 p.m.
2nd Session, 6:15-8:30 p.m.
[Dr. Brett Golson, FBC, Louisville,
662-773-6246]

Mississippi Council on Bivocational/Small
Church Ministries Meeting Supper
Reservations required
Baptist Building — Skyroom, Jackson
3-6:30 p.m.
[Kay McDonnell-601-942-5848 (cell)]

Acts 1:8 Celebration
No reservation required
FBC, Jackson — FH West
4:45-6:30 p.m.
[Laura Marler-601-942-1873 (cell)]

Tuesday, November 1, 2011

Exhibits/Lifeway
FBC, Jackson — FH East;
7:30 a.m.-9 p.m.
[Marcus Peagler-601-292-3283]

Seminary Extension Directors (SBC)
Breakfast
Baptist Building — Chapel, Jackson;
7-8 a.m. [Keith Gordon-601-750-4311 (cell)]

Health Fair — Kickoff to Good Health
FBC, Jackson — FH East Stage
9 a.m.-2 p.m.
[MC Nursing School; Deborah Bolian
601-906-3159 (cell) — bolian@mc.edu]

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
Alumni Luncheon
Advance ticket purchase (\$10) preferred:
Dr. Paul Blanchard, PO Box 867,
Louisville 39339
FBC, Jackson — Chapel Dining Room;
noon [Dr. Paul Blanchard — 662-803-9900
(cell) — amd@winstonbaptist.org]

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
Alumni Association Luncheon
\$10 pay or pick up tickets at door
FBC, Jackson — FH West; noon-1 p.m.
[Rev. Ken Anderson — 601-954-2134 —
Parkway BC, Clinton]

William Carey University Alumni Reception
FBC, Jackson — Chapel Parlor; 5-7 p.m.
[Cindy Cofield (William Carey
University) — 601-318-6561 —
ccofield@wmcarey.edu]

Chaplains' Fall Banquet
Baptist Building — Skyroom, Jackson
4:45-6:30 p.m.
[Carol Wright — 601-668-6008 (cell)]

Blue Mountain College Alumni Dinner
Galloway Methodist Church; 5 p.m.
No reservation required. Pick up ticket
for dinner at Blue Mt. College booth in
FBC, Jackson — FH East, lbennett@
bmc.edu

Wednesday, November 2, 2011

Exhibit/Lifeway
FBC, Jackson — FH East; 7:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
Exhibits: 7:30-9 a.m.
Bookstore: 7:30 a.m.-1 p.m.
[Marcus Peagler — 601-292-3283]

Iranian pastor's fate unsure after conflicting news reports

TEHRAN (BP) — Confusing reports regarding the status of imprisoned Iranian pastor Yousef Nadarkhani are circulating, as two news agencies reported that his case would be retried and two watch groups said the case remains under consideration by Iran's supreme leader.

Reuters reported Oct. 11 that Iran's Supreme Court sent the case back to the lower court that tried him, saying there had been insufficient investigation before the original trial. "The court will issue a new verdict," Reuters said, citing the state-funded Iranian Student's News Agency (ISNA), which had quoted a statement issued by the judiciary.

Agence France-Presse (AFP) also reported a retrial for apostasy based on an ISNA report. Nadarkhani's previous apostasy conviction carried a death sentence. "In its statement, the supreme court noted it had quashed the initial conviction and sentencing 'due to a technicality in the investigation,'" AFP said Oct. 11.

The American Center for Law and Justice (ACLU), which has been following the case closely, acknowledged the confusion surrounding the Reuters report, which was similar to a report the news agency released nearly two weeks ago.

"While it is possible that this is a new development at the urging of the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, we have no confirmation of this from Pastor Yousef's attorney in Iran," Jordan Sekulow, the ACLU's executive director, wrote in a



Nadarkhani

post on the group's website Oct. 11.

"More likely, it is rehashing of old news. As we have been reporting, the Supreme Court of Iran had heard his case earlier this year and remanded it to the trial court to determine if Pastor Yousef was a Muslim after reaching the age of majority before converting to 'Islam,'" Sekulow wrote.

"The Iranian Supreme Court has not heard this case since June 12, 2011, when it remanded the case to the trial court for 'further investigation' to prove that from puberty (15 years) to 19 [Yousef] was not Muslim by his acquaintances, relatives, local elders, and Muslims he frequented. He must repent his Christian faith if this is the case. No research has been done to prove this. (If it can be proved that he was a practicing Muslim as an adult and has not repented, the execution will be carried out."

"It is this investigatory hearing, held on September 25-28, where Pastor Yousef refused to recant his faith," Sekulow explained.

The ACLU said it was

still awaiting the local court's written verdict. "The latest confirmed reports remain that the trial court is seeking the opinion of the Supreme Leader on this case," Sekulow wrote.

Also, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, in a tweet Oct. 12, said news that Nadarkhani may be offered a retrial is incorrect. "As reported his case has been referred to Iran's supreme leader," CSW said.

Meanwhile, ACLU reported Oct. 12 that 58 members of Congress, including 18 Democrats, have signed a letter asking Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to advocate for Nadarkhani's release.

Notably, U.S. Rep. Keith Ellison, D-Minn., the first Muslim elected to Congress, was among them.

Nadarkhani, 32, was arrested in 2009 and charged with apostasy, an offense punishable by hanging. A lower court found that while he had never been Muslim, he was guilty of apostasy because he came from a Muslim family. The Iranian Supreme Court upheld his death sentence.

Nadarkhani's refusal to recant his faith has inspired Christians worldwide. The ACLU reported one of his court exchanges: "Repent means to return. What should I return to? To the blasphemy that I had before my faith in Christ?" he asked.

"To the religion of your ancestors, Islam," the judge reportedly replied. "I cannot," Nadarkhani responded.

'Courageous' church offers missions support for IMB

ROCKVILLE, Va. (BP and local reports) — A few days before the movie, *Courageous*, was released, Michael Catt, pastor of Sherwood Church in Albany, Ga., — the church that produced the film — acknowledged that projects such as the movie have blessed the congregation with tremendous resources and opportunities.

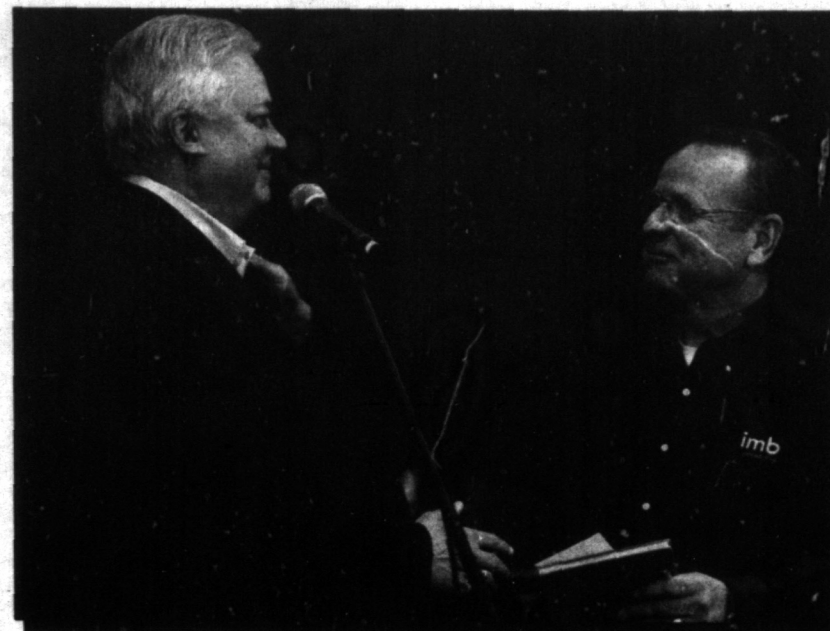
Catt, a native of Pascagoula and graduate of Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College in Clinton, spoke at a staff retreat for the International Mission Board (IMB) in late September at the International Learning Center in Rockville, Va. He presented IMB President Tom Elliff with a book printed in 1899 by the Church of England. The book was filled with stories of how God answered prayers for the church's missionaries.

Catt shared a few words from the book, noting there is still much work to be done. A check for \$100,000 was inside the book.

The gift from Sherwood will go toward supporting nearly 5,000 Southern Baptist missionaries serving overseas. "We get resources through the films," Catt said. "My prayer is, 'God, we want to get it from Your hand and out of our hand as quickly as we can. We don't want to hold on to it.'" Elliff thanked the church, calling the gift an "eternal investment."

Sherwood Church has so far produced four movies: *Flywheel*, *Facing the Giants*, *Fireproof*, and *Courageous*. The revenue from the movies is split multiple ways, and the church gets only a portion of it. The majority of the gross goes to theater owners and the church's film partners — Sony Pictures, for instance.

Still, the church has made enough money from its films to make a difference in several ministries, including building an 82-acre sports park that is open to Albany, Ga., residents. A white 110-foot cross stands in the middle of the park.



FOR MISSIONS — Pascagoula native Michael Catt (left), pastor of Sherwood Church in Albany, Ga., presents International Mission Board President Tom Elliff with a check for \$100,000 at the mission organization's annual staff retreat in Rockville, Va. Two days later, Sherwood released its fourth film, *Courageous*. (BP photo)

REVIVALS AND HOMECOMINGS

1. **Woolmarket Church, Biloxi**: 70th anniversary and homecoming, Oct. 29, 1-8 p.m. and Oct. 30, 10:30 a.m.; Sat., festival, food, fellowship, and music with Red Roots; Sun., worship, reflections, and dinner on the grounds; Tom Hill, speaker; Steve White, music; Paul Crowley, pastor.
2. **New Hope Church, Webster Association**: 125th anniversary, Oct. 23; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by fellowship meal; anniversary service, 1:30 p.m.
3. **Holly Church, Alcorn**: Revival, Oct. 23-26; Danny Singleton, speaker; Greg Long, music; John Boler, pastor; for more information, visit www.hollybaptist.org or (662) 286-3474.
4. **Emmanuel Church, Newton Association**: Revival, Oct. 23-26; Sun., 11 a.m., followed by fellowship lunch; Mon. — Wed.

6:30 p.m.; Thomas Laird, speaker; Jamie Leach, pastor.

5. **Salem Church, Walthall Co.**: Homecoming, Oct. 23, 10:15 a.m., followed by lunch; Bradley Rushing, speaker; Bradley White, music.

6. **First Church, Rose Hill**: Homecoming and revival, Oct. 23-28; Sun., 10:30 a.m.; special music, The Gospel Strings; Mon. — Fri., 7 p.m.; Tony Lambert, Chris Harrison, Wayne Taylor, Steve Pouncey, and Bobby McCord, speakers.

7. **Sherman Church, Tupelo**: Revival, Oct. 23-26; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. — Wed., 7 p.m.; Gregg Thomas, speaker; David Bennett, music.

8. **Liberty Hill Church, Pope**: Revival, Oct. 23-26; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. — Wed., 7 p.m.; Larry Kilgore, speaker; Dave Tribble, music; Jay Anderson, pastor.

STAFF CHANGES



1. Griffin, Lee, and Dill

1. **Rolling Hills Church, Pearl River Association**, has called Barry L. Lee (center) as pastor. He has been serving as interim for the past 3 1/2 years. He began serving as Bivocational pastor Aug. 28. Shown are John Griffin, Lee, and Jimmy Dill.

MBHC sets churches celebrating significant anniversaries in 2012

CLINTON, Ms. (Special) — The Mississippi Baptist Historical Commission (MBHC) has announced that a total of 44 churches, representing 5,850 years of Kingdom work, will reach significant milestones in 2012 and are urged to celebrate those anniversaries, according to MBHC Executive Secretary Edward L. McMillan.

Each church that informs MBHC of their significant anniversary celebration will receive a framed certificate and letter of commendation. A significant anniversary is defined by the commission as 200 years, 175 years, 150 years, 125 years, and 100 years.

The commission requests that any church celebrating a significant anniversary that is not included in the list below should contact MBHC at P.O. Box

4024, Clinton, MS 39058. Telephone: (601) 925-3434. E-mail: mbhc@mc.edu. Churches celebrating significant anniversaries, followed by the Baptist association with which they are affiliated, include:

200 Years (Organized 1812)
Bogue Chitto (Pike)
Cedar Grove (Marion)

175 Years (Organized 1837)
Bluff Springs (Choctaw)
Concord (Choctaw)
First, Aberdeen (Monroe)
First, Holly Springs (Marshall)
First, Winona (Montgomery)
Mt. Pleasant (Lincoln)
New Hope (Franklin)
Shiloh (Chickasaw)

Splunge (Monroe)
Yockanookany (Attala)
Zion (Pontotoc)

150 Years (Organized 1862)
First, Summit (Pike)

125 Years (Organized 1887)
East Pleasant Grove (Clarke)
Enon (Golden Triangle)
Ephesus (Scott)
Escatawpa (Jackson)
First, Flora (Metro)
First, Leland (Washington)
Hamburg (Franklin)
Harmony (Copiah)
Jacinto (Alcorn)
Loxahoma (X-Tended Mission)
Macedonia (Union)
Myrtle (Union)

Midway (Leake)
Oak Hill (Prentiss)
Rock Branch (Newton)

100 Years (Organized 1912)
Center Hill (Pontotoc)
Clifton (Scott)
Cold Springs (Cov.-Jeff. Davis)
Dublin (Cov.-Jeff. Davis)
First, Bude (Franklin)
Harmony (Union)
Lawrence (Newton)
Macedonia (Lee)
Oak Grove (Yazoo)
Oakland (Yalobusha)
Paden (Tishomingo)
Pine Bluff (New Choctaw)
Shady Grove (Panola)
Tiptersville (Benton-Tippah)
Williamsville (Attala)

THE VILLAGE VIEW



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GIFTS OF HONOR AND MEMORY

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor with taste and respect those who are and have been special to our special friends.

AUGUST 2011

MEMORIALS

Jane Shalles
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Shades of REAd Women on Mission group at First Baptist Church, Laurel, Mississippi recently hosted a program focusing on The Baptist Children's Village ministry. The group is facilitated by Ms. Lynda McKinley.

BCV EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY IN NORTH MISSISSIPPI

The BCV employs Christian, mission-minded, husband and wife teams, without dependent children or pets, to serve in the position of Houseparents. The couples must be mature Christian adults with personal integrity, character and of good reputation with standards and ethics expected of any member of The Baptist Children's Village staff.

They receive a salary with benefits and are provided a private bedroom and meals while on duty. The primary job responsibility of Houseparents is to maintain a home-like environment that models healthy, Christian family living for children and youth residents. They are the primary caregivers and help with everything from transportation and homework to laundry and meals when on duty.

Houseparent responsibilities are varied and somewhat dependent upon which campus and to which cottage the couple is assigned. However, all Houseparents need to be in good physical, mental and emotional health. They must be cooperative and comfortable working in a team environment.

To apply for the current Houseparent opening in North Mississippi, please contact Celeste Cade at 601-922-2242 or ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com.

A complete job description and application may be downloaded at www.baptistchildrensvillage.com.

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

Wholeness Restored

Mark 5:1-3, 6-13a, 15-20

By Huey Dedmon

One of my favorite new television shows is called "Restoration." On the show, people bring old bicycles, drink machines, cash registers, gas pumps, etc. to be restored to their original beauty. If you watch the show you know that to the normal person, the items look like pieces of worthless junk. To the restoration master though, he can see what the item once was and what it can be again. Our story this week is one with which we are all familiar. Mark tells us about Jesus' miracle of casting demons out of a man in the region of the Gerasenes, (Gadarenes, KJV). Jesus is traveling by boat and as soon as He gets out of the boat, a man possessed by an "unclean spirit" recognizes Jesus and kneels at His feet. This miracle is

a demonstration of not only Jesus' power over demons, it is an example of His power to restore wholeness to any person's broken life.

Jesus Conquers Evil

Mark 5:1-3, 6-13a

In these verses Mark gives us a unique look at several very important aspects of the life of Jesus. Right away the demons inside of the man recognized Jesus and knew who he was. This recognition by the demons of Jesus reminds us that Jesus is the son of God and, as Christians, we do not need to fear Satan or his demons because Jesus is greater. We also see that the demons could not do anything without Jesus' permission. They begged Jesus not to torment them and asked Jesus to send them into a nearby herd of pigs. While this is



Dedmon

Jesus Makes Us Whole

Mark 5:15-17

As you can imagine, this event drew the attention of the entire region. News spread quickly and everyone came to see what was going on. When they came, they found the demon possessed man sitting with Jesus, fully clothed, and

not the time for a discussion on the existence of or presence of unclean spirits and demons in the world, Mark's account and many other accounts in scripture should end the discussion. The question is not whether they exist. The question is, "Are we filled with the Holy Spirit?" If we are a child of God, we are filled with God's spirit, and have nothing to fear from Satan or his demons. Remember, Jesus is greater! Knowing this gives us great security but it does not excuse us from being on the alert, watching out for Satan's activities in the world.

Jesus Gives Us Responsibility

Mark 5:18-20

As Jesus prepared to leave,

in his right mind. While he was possessed by the demon, his reputation was well known, and no one was able to keep him bound. Now we find him sitting calmly with Jesus, restored, a whole man. The reaction of the people was fear. As the story spread, they began to ask Jesus to leave. There was such a change in this man's life that it invoked fear into the people. When Jesus makes a person whole, there will be a visible change in the pattern of their life. Some changes are immediate, as in this case, and other changes take time as they discover more truths from God's word. I wonder if anybody in the crowd said, "I wonder how long he will stay clean?" There will be varied reactions to the work of Jesus in a person's life but we should never be afraid of the changes we see from that work.

Dedmon is associate pastor for education and outreach, Brandon Church, Brandon.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

It's All About God's Plan

Romans 10:1-4, 8b-18a; 11:28-32

By Marion D. Duncan

Paul opens his heart to the Jews as he shares what he sees in their zeal for God — zeal without knowledge — which Paul says is misguided and misdirected. Paul reminisces about the days when he thought he was doing the right thing by persecuting the followers of Christ because their zeal was directed differently from his own. He even attests to the fact that if one could provide salvation for himself by any other means except by the blood of Christ, he would be the best qualified. Israel cannot assume that since they were God's chosen people that they can be saved by the misguided religious exercise of keeping the law. The law cannot save — that is the prerogative of grace. After Christ's death and res-

urrection, God's chosen people became all of those who believe in His son. Nationally Israel rejected Jesus and brought God's wrath upon the nation. Each individual needs to recognize his lost condition, accept Christ as personal Savior, and become part of the true Israel of God. Paul expressed his concern for his people by praying for their salvation, showing he knew they too needed to believe in Christ. What Paul wanted most and his prayer to God was his desire for all of Israel to be saved. He knows that they really tried to follow God, but they do not know the right way — they do not understand how God makes people right with him (righteous). Therefore, they tried to make themselves right with God in their own way — by



Duncan

the law. The good news is that Christ's death and resurrection was done for us, and we only have to accept and take by faith.

"... if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9)

Confession of faith is important because it is the revealing of faith. It bears witness to what has taken place in the heart and provides the unbeliever knowledge of what Christ has done for mankind and his need for salvation and the gift of eternal life. Paul cites two Old Testament passages to reinforce the truth that God makes no distinction between people and has provided the same way to salvation to all. The first reference is found in Isaiah 28:16, "Every one who believes in Him will not be put to shame." The second comes from Joel 2:32, "Every one who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." No limitation is there.

The promise is to everyone; therefore, there is no difference between Jew and Greek. He is appealing to his listeners to hear the words of the prophets when they declared that faith is the only way to God, and that that way is open to every man, woman, and child. (The Letter to the Romans, John Barclay) The questions that appear in verses 14-15 seem to stem from the concern that some of Israel might not hear that salvation is by faith, not by the law. Paul's answer to these questions is that Israel had indeed heard, but Israel had not believed; therefore, Israel is responsible for her failure to attain God's righteousness. He says men cannot say that Israel did not hear because in Isaiah 52:7 those who came bringing the gospel were described and affirmed. But, many did not believe — "He was despised and rejected by men... and we esteemed Him not." Isaiah 53:3 Hearing was not the problem; heeding was the problem. Israel heard, but did not heed. Justification by faith was revealed to Abraham,

"And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham." (Galatians 3:8) Paul insisted that God had been stretching out hands of appeal to Israel, and Israel had always been disobedient and perverse. Isaiah 65:1 proclaims how God revealed himself to those who did not ask for Him, but He was found by those who did not seek Him. Israel, the people through whom God chose to bless the nations, rejected Him, and were active enemies toward Him even while they were passive recipients of His love. This opened the door to the Gentiles to receive God's mercy, but God will love Israel into reconciliation with him because of his promise to the patriarchs. God will grant the promise not because of their race, but because of the grace and mercy of his love. (The Broadman Bible Commentary, v.10)

Duncan is a member and pastor's wife from First Church, Macon.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if

submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

Planning for the New Church Year

As you plan your programs for your church groups in this new church year, including WMU, Men's Ministry,

and Senior Adults, please request a speaker from The Baptist Children's Village. We have representatives who travel all across the state who can give a presentation that accommodates your group. Our representatives are pleased to work with any group no matter the size.

Please call Celeste Cade, 601-922-2242 or e-mail ccade@baptistchildrensvillage.com, to reserve your date and time.

Supreme Court hears minister definition arguments

WASHINGTON (BP) — The U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in early October in a case that could have a serious impact on what the definition of a minister is and who has defining rights.

The case was brought before the Supreme Court to decide if a teacher "called" to serve at a Lutheran school in Michigan should have been considered a minister at the time she was fired. The deeper issue in the case, however, is whether the federal government should have the authority to interfere and decide for faith-based institutions what defines a minister and who can be hired and fired.

Hosanna-Tabor Evangelical Lutheran Church considered Cheryl Perich a minister when it commissioned her to teach at its school in Redford, Mi. When she became ill, she took a medical leave of absence for diagnosed narcolepsy that was extended for more than six months.

When Perich returned to the school after her doctor cleared her for work, the school had already hired a replacement teacher and had no available positions. Perich threatened to sue the school for discrimination and was fired for going against the church's teachings that forbid going to outside help to settle disputes.

The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati overturned a federal judge's decision in a suit brought by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), and determined Perich's responsibilities did not constitute those of a minister.

The debate before the

Supreme Court focused on what is known as the "ministerial exception," a longstanding principle in the federal courts that prohibits the government from using job discrimination laws against churches and other religious bodies in their hiring and firing of ministers.

A person who teaches doctrines of faith as part of the job description is considered a minister, said Douglas Laycock, a University of Virginia law professor who argued on behalf of the church.

The U.S. Department of Justice surprised even some advocates of strict separation of church and state in contending the "ministerial exception" should be totally rejected. Some of the justices expressed sympathy for the argument of Hosanna-Tabor and religious liberty advocates that the government should not infringe on church decisions regarding its leadership.

"It's none of the business of the government to decide what the substantial interest of the church is," Associate Justice Antonin Scalia said. "There, in black and white in the text of the Constitution, are

special protections for religion," he pointed out.

Despite the First Amendment protections for religious institutions against government interference, lawyers

IMB and ERLC contention:

A "ministerial exception" is critical to religious liberty."

The ministerial exception is rooted in two aspects of the First Amendment, according to the brief: (1) The freedom to associate based on the right to assemble, and (2) the right to free exercise of religion.

representing the EEOC's position did not agree that churches and faith-based schools should be treated differently than secular institutions with employees. Walter Dellinger, who argued for the EEOC stance, told the court

the primary reason the Sixth Circuit Court was correct in ruling Perich was not a minister "is she carries out such important secular functions in addition to her religious duties."

Chief Justice John Roberts interrupted, telling Dellinger, "[T]hat can't be the test. The Pope is a head of state carrying out secular functions, right? Those are important. So he is not a minister?"

Assistant U.S. Solicitor General Leandra Kruger, representing the EEOC, seemed to try to do her best to get the court to view the case without the religion aspects attached to it. Responding to Kruger, Associate Justice Stephen Breyer said that "since this is tough and I'm stuck on this, I don't see

how you can avoid going into religion to some degree."

The rights of churches and other religious organizations to determine their leaders and teachers is protected from gov-

ernment interference by the U.S. Constitution, according to two Southern Baptist entities who have joined other religious organizations who have filed a friend of the court brief.

The International

Mission Board (IMB) and Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) signed on to the friend of the court brief. The IMB and ERLC, as well as three other religious groups that signed on, contended a "robust 'ministerial exception' is critical to religious liberty." The ministerial exception is rooted in two aspects of the First Amendment, according to the brief: (1) The freedom to associate based on the right to assemble, and (2) the right to free exercise of religion.

"Religious groups have the right to choose, free from governmental interference, who will lead them and who will pass their faith onto the next generation," according to the brief. "Congress has no authority to interfere. This is the essence of

the ministerial exception."

The Constitution's framers approved the First Amendment's assembly clause to protect the right of Americans to associate in groups, including religious

"It's none of the business of the government to decide what the substantial interest of the church is. There, in black and white in the text of the Constitution, are special protections for religion."

—Antonin Scalia
associate justice
U.S. Department of Justice

ones, said the brief endorsed by IMB and the ERLC. The Supreme Court also has protected "freedom of association" in many cases, according to the brief.

The brief also argued that con-

flicts over church leaders provided inspiration for the free-exercise clause of the First Amendment. The high court has long upheld such protection for religious groups in deciding on leadership, the brief said.

For churches and other religious organizations, "the right to control who teaches their faith, and who transmits it to the next generation, remains indispensable to the free exercise of religion," the brief said.

The other groups signing onto the brief endorsed by IMB and the ERLC were the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel, the Council of Hindu Temples of North America, and the Mandaean Association of Massachusetts.

First Person: Four keys to closing your church's back door

By Thom S. Rainer
Correspondent

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — I had an extended conversation with a pastor of a church this past week. The topic was not that different from those I've had with church leaders for nearly 25 years.

The pastor's words were similar to those I've heard repeated hundreds of times: "We have a pretty good front door with a healthy number of guests, and we've had a steady increase in our number of new members. Our problem is really not the front door; it's the back door. If we could just keep a fourth of all those who become involved in our church for a few months or more, we would be triple our size."

He then asked the question I was anticipating: "So how do we close the back door? What do we do to keep people from leaving our church or just becoming inactive?"

In our research of thousands of churches, we have found four common characteristics of congregations that have effective assimilation by almost any metric. The churches that have effectively closed the

back door are few in number, suggesting that the solution is easier said than done. Look at the four keys to effective assimilation. They are obviously not mutually exclusive.

• Membership high expectations.

More is expected of members in high assimilation churches. Church discipline is more likely to be exercised in these churches as well. These churches typically have required entry point or membership classes.

Becoming a part of these congregations is more than completing a card or walking an aisle. Members are expected to be involved and stay involved.

• Small group involvement. A concerted effort is made to get members and



Rainer

attendees involved in small groups. The form of the group may be a Sunday School class, a home group, or a small group meeting elsewhere.

The key is to get people connected to others, typically in weekly groups. The majority of small groups study the Bible or biblically-related material.

• Ministry/missions involvement. High assimilation churches encourage people to be involved in ministry. A few even require ministry involvement prior to accepting someone into membership. Members who are involved in missions and ministry feel connected to the church.

The Millennial generation, those born between 1980 and 2000, will not likely stay with a church at all if they are not involved in the ministries and missions of the church.

• Relational connections. In any organization, people stay connected more to other people than the organization itself. We are relational creatures. Local congregations are no exceptions.

People are more likely to stay connected to the church if they have developed meaningful friendships and relationships with others in the church.

If these four keys are the solution to assimilation problems, why do relatively few churches practice them? Simply stated, the solutions require hard work. Often getting people in the front door is easier than keeping them from leaving through the back door.

Also, some churches have established traditions of low expectations. Changing almost anything, particularly expectations of members, can be a challenge. Members who came into the church with low expectations often resist the change. Their desired comfort is greater than their concern for the overall health of the congregation.

Our most recent research indicates that the American population as a whole is not resistant to visiting a church. The potential for an open front door is good. The greater challenge may be closing the back door, and that challenge can only be met if congregations are fundamentally willing to change their attitude of, "We've never done it that way before."

Rainer is president of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, headquartered in Nashville. This column first appeared at ThomRainer.com.